

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figs. 1 and 2. These sheets, which includes Figs. 1-2, replaces the original sheets. The changes reflected in these replacement sheets primarily correct discrepancies between items numbers appearing in the specification and item numbers appearing on the drawings.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the above identified application in light of the Office Action dated November 10, 2005. Claims 1, 3-6 and 8-12 are now presented for examination. Claims 1, 10 and 12 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention, in terms which distinguish over the art of record. Claims 2 and 7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. The specification has been carefully reviewed and amended as to matters of form, including those kindly pointed out in the Office Action. The drawing objections pointed out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action have been addressed in the attached drawing "Replacement Sheets".

Claims 1, 10 and 12 are the only independent claims.

Claims 1-5 and 8-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,006,264 (Colby). Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious from Colby in view of "the Applicant's discussion of the prior art". The Specification was objected to for not properly corresponding to Fig. 2.

Applicants have addressed this objection to the Specification by modifying item numbers in Fig. 2 to correctly correspond with the description. It is believed that the objection has been obviated and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants have addressed the rejection of the claims in light of Colby by amending each of the independent claims to incorporate the features of original claims 2 and 7. Accordingly, the present invention as defined by newly amended claim 1 relates to a method of configuring a load balancer for dispatching client requests amongst a plurality of servers. The method comprises creating and storing a configuration file in a local memory for each one of the plurality of servers. Each such configuration file contains parameters pertaining to said server to be applied for configuring a load balancing scheme. These parameters comprise session affinity rules. The method further comprises reading the parameters from the configuration file for each of the servers and configuring the load balancer to dispatch client requests to the servers based on an algorithm using the parameters.

As understood by applicants, Colby relates to a method and system for directing flow between a client and a server that includes some automation of the process of feeding a load balancing algorithm with various parameters for each server. Colby utilizes a module called an Intelligent Content Probe that populates the load balancer with server and content information by probing servers for specific content relevant to load balancing that is not already stored in the load balancer.

The present invention discusses the phrase “session affinity” as being used for describing rules for attempting to send different requests in a given session to the same server clone in a server group, when possible (page 9, lines 14-23). In particular it notes the importance of session affinity parameters in performing server assignments to thereby improve system performance:

... it is desirable in a server farm for all requests in a given session that are to be serviced by a given server group to be serviced by the same clone within that group. At least one of the reasons that this is beneficial is because, if different requests in a given session are serviced by different servers, then each of those servers must either build or be able to retrieve from a database the same session information. Reading and writing to a database for this purpose creates a substantial amount of additional traffic and overhead processing in the server farm

As noted at page 10 of the specification, while these parameters are important in a proper load balancing algorithm, they typically are entered manually and are consequently prone to error. The present invention, as defined by independent claim 1, permits session affinity parameters (e.g., “server cookies” as noted at page 11, line 11 of the specification) to be read from a server’s local file. As noted at page 14, lines 16-19, session affinity cookies are unique to each server. Their local storage at the server permits them to be “properly formatted into the markup language supported by the load balancer and returned to the load balancer” in response to a request for configuration information from a server (page 11, lines 12-18).

Colby fails to teach or suggest use of affinity information, much less a means by which affinity information can automatically be provided to a load balancer. Paragraph 4 at page 7 of the Office Action argues that while the parameters utilized by Colby do not include session affinity rules, it would be obvious to do so in light of the applicants’ discussion of the prior art on page 7, lines 14-21 of his specification. However, this cited passage relates to the applicants’

discussion of the prior art noted above which essentially notes that while this information is very useful, it typically is entered manually. The present invention overcomes this problem in the prior art. Colby neither teaches nor suggests how his use of various databases can be used to automate the function of supplying session affinity rules to a load balancer.

Applicant submits that neither Colby alone, nor Colby in combination with Applicants' discussion of the prior art, teaches the feature of claim 1 where session affinity rules are obtained by a load balancer by reading parameters from a plurality of server configuration files. Accordingly, claim 1 is deemed patentable over Colby. Claims 10 and 12 also contain this feature and are deemed patentable over Colby for at least the same reasons.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Annotated Marked-up Drawings

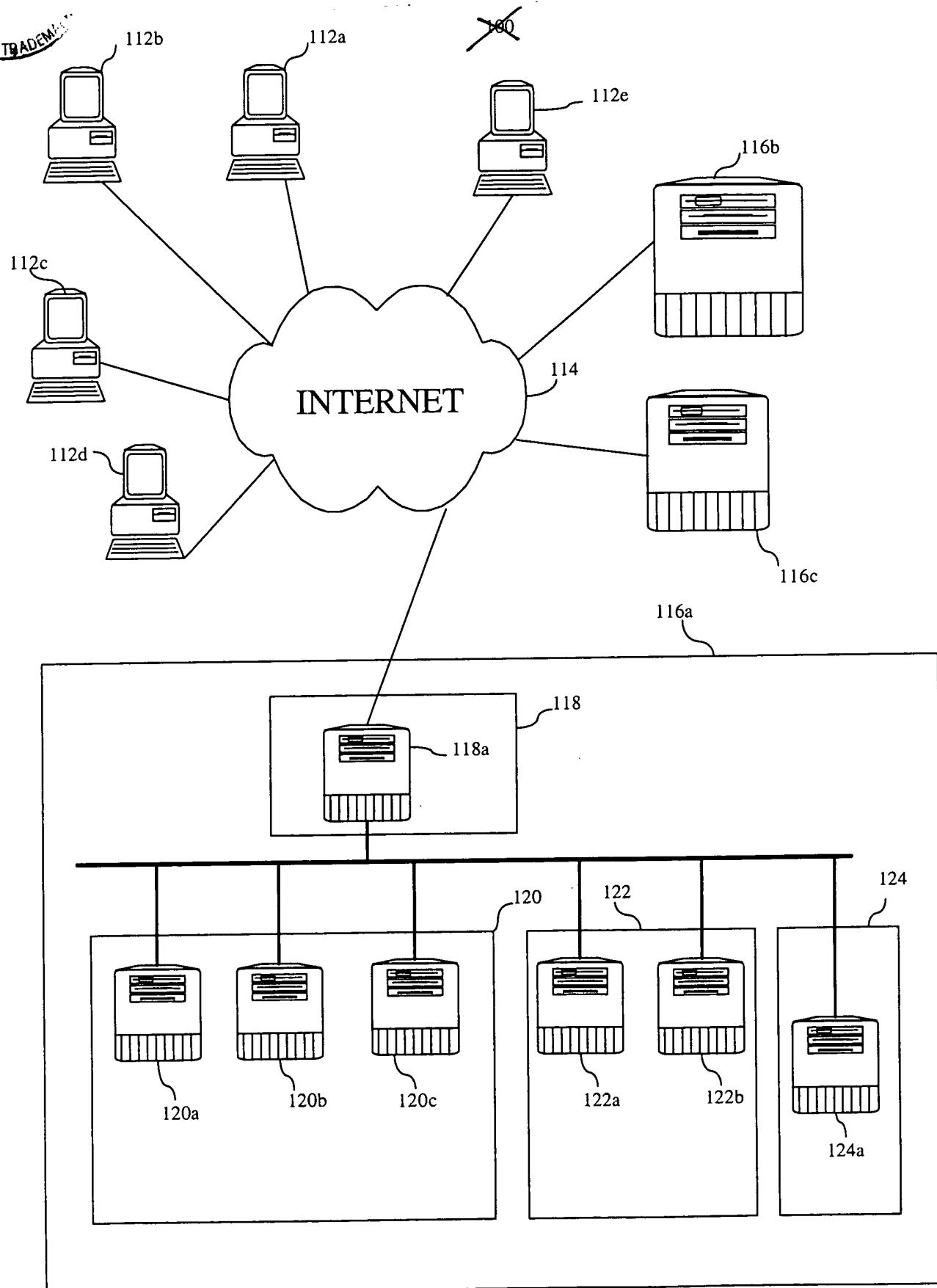


FIGURE 1 (PRIOR ART)

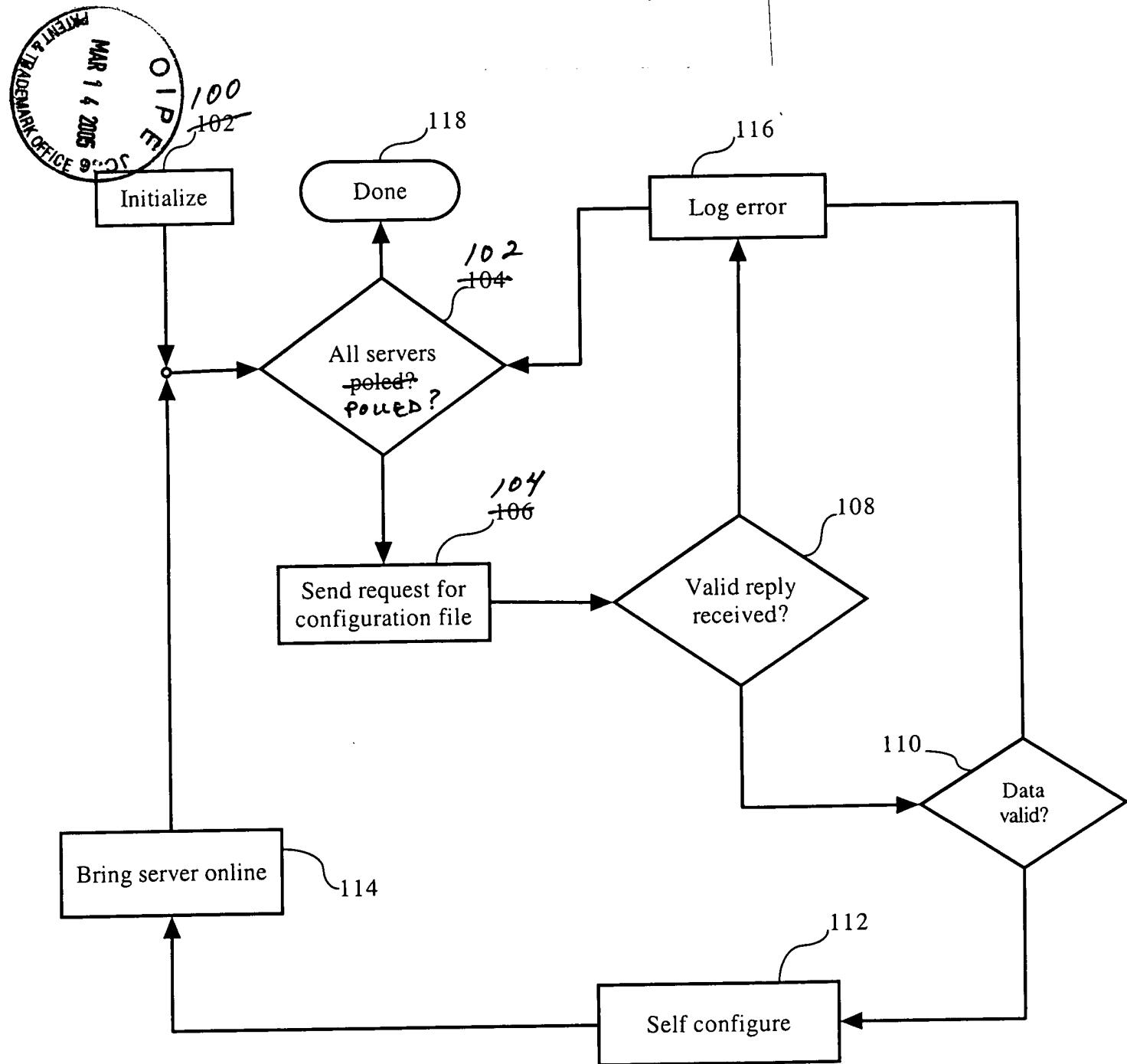


FIGURE 2